

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON Monday, 5th October, 2015

PRESENT:

Councillors: Patrick Berryman, Liz Morris, Anne Stennett and Ann Waters (Chair)

368. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred those present to Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting, and the Committee noted this information.

369. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hare & Councillor Gunes.

Councillor Weston gave apologies as she had to attend another meeting.

370. ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING WITH ASPIRE

NOTED: The actions listed in the notes of the meeting with Aspire.

The Director of Children's Services identified finding an additional resource to work with Anneke as a significant issue, given budgetary constraints. The Committee discussed that care leavers or graduate trainees could be possible solutions. The Committee also discussed whether someone from Children in Care could provide some leadership and vision to the group. The AD Safeguarding proposed outlining the role of Aspire clearly on the new leaflets being developed in order to clearly outline to prospective Aspire members what the organisation did and what its focus was.

371. URGENT BUSINESS

None

372. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

373. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2015 were AGREED.

The Chair COMMENTED that the previous action around arranging a day's work experience for CIC/ care leavers with councillors was incomplete and suggested raising the issue at the Member training event later that week.

Action: Cllr Waters

374. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee NOTED the Corporate Parenting Agenda Plan 2015/16.

375. PERFORMANCE, INCLUDING PERMANENCY PLANS FOR LAC

RECEIVED the report on Performance for the Year to August 2015. Report included in the agenda pack (pages 9 to 18).

NOTED in response to discussion:

- An overall improving trajectory in relation to the majority of performance indicators.
- As of the 5th October there were 450 Children in Care, which was 76 per 10,000 population including 36 unaccompanied asylum seeker children. Haringey's rate of LAC remained significantly above the London (54) and National average (60) although the gap had closed to the statistical neighbour rate of 70.
- Permanency was secured for 18% of children who ceased to be Looked After. In the year to August 2015 there were 9 adoptions and 7 Special Guardianship Orders.
- The downward trajectory of the average amount of time taken for children being placed for adoption (438 days). The committee noted significant improvement in performance for this indicator compared to last year. This figure was above national average but was in line with statistical neighbours.
- Adoption was down 24% this year nationally.
- 79 children were placed 20 miles or more from Haringey at the end of August 2015. This equated to 18.3% against a 16% target but on an improving trajectory.
- At the end of August, 96% of LAC, in care for over a month, had an up to date health assessment, a sustained improvement which compared favourably with the London average.
- Following concerted effort, including technical input and data cleansing, 74% of LAC had an up to date Care Plan at mid-September, improved from the position of 49% at the end of May but remaining below the expected level.
- The average care proceedings duration in 2014/15 was 34 weeks with trends towards a longer duration than the statutory minimum. In quarter 1 this trend

had been reversed towards shorter duration and an average duration of 32.4 weeks.

- There had been a decline (57%) in the number of Personal Education Plans (PEP) being completed since the 71% achieved in July, but the Committee noted that this was partially attributable to the school summer holidays. The Committee noted that advice from the DfE on reporting timescales was that the PEP's should be held three times a year and that could either be 3 school based meetings or 2 school based meetings with a review in between. It was clarified that at present the figures were based on six-monthly reviews and that the new guidance of 3 reviews per year was implemented as of September. Virtual Schools needed to establish a process for recording any reviews and their inclusion into the performance figures.

Action: Fiona Smith

- The Committee noted that the social worker was responsible for initiating the PEP and for recording it on the child's file but when the meetings took place in school the teacher would chair the meeting and record the actions taken. The effect was that it could be difficult to then get the paperwork back from the schools. Virtual schools to revisit the issue of bringing in electronic PEP's, Virtual School Head to bring a copy of an e-PEP to the next CPAC for discussion.

Action: Fiona Smith

- 27% of LAC aged 16 and over had pathway plans less than 6 months old which although better than levels achieved earlier in the year, was below the expected levels. Focused attention had increased performance on pathway plans to 40% by mid September. The new Head of Service was putting a performance review system in place with team managers to attend a session to review all relevant care and pathway plans and agree dates for timely completion. It was clarified that a pathway plan was for LAC who were 16 and over, whilst care plans were for those under the age of 16. The Committee NOTED that there was a training need for managers on Mosaic because plans were being done but they were not being correctly recorded and that this had a significant effect on performance.

Action: Annie Walker/Dominic Porter-Moore

- In August five children were recorded as missing from care in the month and 16 were away from their placement without authorisation.
- Performance for LAC children with an up to date dental visit was on a downward trajectory with current performance at 76% which had dipped from 91% in March. Performance had improved slightly since the end of July.
- The latest published educational attainment data showed that 305 of Children in Need achieved reading, writing and maths at Level 4+, a decline from 44.25 the previous year and below the average for both London and nationally.

- In response to a question, around the number of foster carers attracted by the banner campaign across Haringey, the Children's Service Manager advised that since April 2013, 31 carers had been approved which was below the target of 40, which was considered as an ambitious target. The Children's Service Manager also advised that she had discussed with NRS that a number of banners had been removed due to their deteriorating state and it was considered that this had an impact on the number of foster carers coming forward.
- The Committee noted that the contract with NRS was based on a fee per child that was successfully placed in foster care.
- In response to a question about whether the Council were satisfied with NRS, the AD Safeguarding and Social Care advised that the experience had been mixed and that quality of reports received was often low. The Council did not specify the need for foster carers for a mixed age group when establishing the contract with NRS.
- Cllr Berryman commented that a couple he knew had given up trying to foster a child in Haringey due to difficulties in the process and had instead fostered through Barnet.
- The Children in Care Service Manager advocated undertaking a mystery shopper approach to get a better understanding of the quality of service offered by NRS. The Children in Care Service Manager also advised that the organisation needed to look at the offer and support offered to potential foster carers. The Committee AGREED to undertake some mystery shopper analysis.
Action: Dominic Porter-Moore
- Children in Care Service Manager advised that he would be reviewing the NRS contract with the AD Commissioning to agree next steps.
Action: Dominic Porter-Moore
- In response to a question around poor performance of Children in Care & placements on their 19th birthday, the Committee noted that this was a very small cohort and that the figures could be significantly affected by a negative result.

AGREED to note the report.

376. DISABLED LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

RECEIVED the Disabled LAC report that was requested following the Committee's request for an update on what the issues and challenges were in relation to disabled Looked After Children. The report was included in the agenda pack (pages 19 to 26).

NOTED that

- There were currently 22 children looked after by Haringey allocated in the Disabled Children's Team.
- Foster carers who were considering the option of applying for SGO status had not pursued the option due to a concern that the support identified in the SGO plan, would not be sufficient to meet their needs compared to the allowance they receive through their fostering allowance. Children's Service Manager advised that the maximum allowance for Special Guardianship was £185 per week which was about half of the allowance for a foster carer. The levels of support and guidance were also significantly lower for special guardianship.
- One third of the Disabled Children's Team's LAC were placed over 20 miles from Haringey, with 4 of the 7 children placed in residential homes or schools.
- An issue was identified in that children were travelling some distances from their residential home in order to maintain their placement in the local special school. The Director of Children's Services identified that some children had two-hour journeys to school. The Committee noted that the type of disability could have a limiting effect on the type of educational establishment available. Officers advised that parents could be reluctant to push children into public transport or to alter a settled routine. The Head of Integrated Service was looking into how to address the issues raised around transport. The Head of Integrated Service to report to the Committee on the reasons behind why those children were being transported a long distance.

Action: Vicki Monk-Meyer

- The Committee welcomed the report and commented that they found having information on disabled Looked After Children constructive.
- In response to a question on how many of the 31 foster carers recruited through the banner campaign were able to foster a disabled child, the Children's Service Manager advised that there was one.

AGREED to note the report.

377. PEP PERFORMANCE

RECEIVED a report updating the Committee on performance around PEP's covering the period September 2014 – July 2015, with additional commentary on pathway plans and care plans. The report was included in the agenda pack (pages 27 to 30).

NOTED that

- The latest figures for performance on PEP completion showed a 14% point dip from 71% in July 2015 to 57% in September 2015. This could be accounted for due to it being the start of the school year, as figures from 2014 showed a similar picture.

- The Head of Virtual Schools confirmed that her service offered dedicated training to designated teachers and social workers.
- One of the key issues related to organisation and the need to agree a date for all of the relevant people to attend for example, teacher, social worker, foster carer, educational psychologist.
- In response to a question around the extent to which the child is involved in the PEP, the Head of Virtual Schools replied that the child should be involved in the process, including attending at least part of the meeting, at a relatively young age. The PEP provided the child with the opportunity to ask for additional help or support in a particular subject. Deputy Head of Service, Children & Families stated that participation levels of the child were mixed but stated that the PEP's took place in school hours with the child present.
- The Head of Virtual Schools confirmed that the PEP was an opportunity to discuss what the Pupil Premium was being used on and it should be recorded in the PEP and reported up to Virtual Schools.
- The Committee noted that there was an expectation that the foster carer allowance would provide for IT equipment although the Pupil Premium was often used to purchase laptops.
- The Head of Virtual Schools advised that her service had sight of what the school had agreed in the PEP and would also follow up with the social worker if needed, for instance if equipment had been promised but not delivered. Virtual Schools could also attend PEP meetings at the school to follow up on issues.
- The Head of Virtual Schools advised that assessing the impact and outcomes of any additional support required was crucial to developing robust PEP's.

378. FINDINGS FROM TASK & FINISH GROUP ON MISSING CHILDREN

RECEIVED a verbal update from the AD Safeguarding and Social Care on the Task and Finish Group for Missing Children. The group was set up by the LSCB and was chaired by the Borough Commander. The Committee noted that there was a lack of buy-in from the police to the group and that the work which was supposed to be concluded in July had been delayed. The AD Safeguarding and Social Care advised that Children's Services had taken a lead in the process due to the delays. A breakfast meeting was arranged between relevant people within the three main agencies to discuss information around reoccurring cases of children missing from care, who may be at risk of CSE and refer those to the MACE. The Director of Children's Services advised that the Borough Commander agreed to attend the meeting and that the purpose was for partners to sit down and discuss what themes there were, see what the high profile cases were and agree whether there was anything strategically or system wise that needed to be done.

AD Safeguarding and Social Care advised that a report was being drafted on the key findings and would be presented in due course.

Action: Neelam Bhardwaja

379. PAN-LONDON ADOPTION BID

RECEIVED a verbal update from the Director of Children's Services on the pan-London adoption bid. A proposal was developed and submitted to the DfE, outlining how bringing together adoption services for 33 local authorities might work and what the challenges might be. NOTED that DfE had initially accepted the proposal and that funding had been released for further development of an implementation plan and developing the details further. The proposed milestones for the project were:

- October to January would involve a further exploration of what the costs might be of the service, including the cost of delay and the potential efficiency savings involved.
- January to August 2016, was allocated to designing and testing the new service
- Implementation, rollout and new approach to stakeholders launch would be the final stage.

The Director of Children's Services identified that key concerns at this initial stage were what the governance arrangements were and what the local representation was in such a regionalised service.

The Committee noted that at present most authorities would have their own adoption panels with their own independent chairs and that the effect was that each panel were operating from the same pool of potential carers. The proposals would examine whether one regional adoption panel would be more effective. Officers confirmed that proposals would be for the regionalisation of all adoption based services including; family finding, doctor recruitment, adoption support and special guardianship support.

AGREED that an update on the pan-London adoption bid was to be standing item on future agendas.

Action: Jon Abbey/Clerk

380. PLAN/VISION FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

RECEIVED a verbal update from the Director of Children's Services that he would bring an outline draft of the plan/vision to the next meeting.

Action: Jon Abbey/Clerk

The Chair reiterated that the AD Safeguarding and Social Care was providing a training session for all Members on the 6th October to outline what the role of being a corporate parent involved.

381. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

382. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of items that contain exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985): paras 1 & 2: namely information relating to any individual, and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

383. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS

None

384. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Future meetings

NOTED the following dates:

5 January 2016

4 April 2016

All meetings are scheduled to start at 6.30pm.

CHAIR: Councillor Ann Waters

Signed by Chair

Date